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THE FANEUIL HALL GRASSHOPPER AND SHEM DROWN

Apropos of the note on entomological signboards in the December 1948 issue of this Journal, the late Dr. William Procter while passing through Boston about 25 years ago, noticed the old grasshopper weather-vane on Faneuil Hall. Upon making inquiry the librarian of the State House supplied the following information, which Dr. Procter passed on to Harry B. Weiss.

Shem Drown was born at Kittery, Maine in 1683. His father, Leonard Drown, born 1646, came to Kittery from the west of England, the first of the family to come over to those shores. On account of the French and Indian wars he moved with his family to Boston in 1692, where he died October 31, 1729, and was buried at Copp's Hill.

Shem Drown was made a deacon of the First Baptist Church in 1721. He died January 13, 1774, aged ninety-one years.

In 1721 he made a cockerel for the vane of the "new brick church" on Hanover Street, which was built the year before. In 1873 this

cockerel, or rooster, was moved to the Shepard Memorial Church, Cambridge, where he still greets the dawn and guards the Washington Elm.

The grasshopper on Faneuil Hall was made in 1742 of hammered copper. When it was down for repairs about fifty years ago, a paper was found inside of it, which read in part as follows:

Shem Drown Made Itt, May 25, 1742

To my Brethren and
Fellow Grasshopper

Fell in ye year 1755 November 15th day from ye Market by a great Earthquake [repaired] by my old master above.

Again like to have met with my utter Ruin by Fire, but Hopping Timely from my Publick Scitation came off with Broken bones, and much Bruised, Cured and again fixed by Old Master's Son Thomas Drown, June 28th, 1763.

On the evening of Evacuation day, 1889, the "Bird" as it is called, was knocked from its perch by the carelessness of the men taking in the flag and fell to the street, losing its eyes, horns and two feet. It was soon repaired by E. B. Badger & Sons Company and, feeling very proud in a new coat of goldleaf, it gave a reception in the historic hall before getting back on the perch from which it had been missed.

In 1899 the "Bird" left the perch again, while the old wooden cupola that had long been considered a "fire trap" was replaced by a copper and steel one, erected by E. B. Badger & Sons Company.

Deacon Drown also made the Indian Chief, with bent bow and arrow drawn, which for nearly one hundred years did duty as a vane on the cupola of the Province House. It is now in the rooms of the Massachusetts Historical Association.—H. B. W.



Weiss, Harry B. 1954. "The Faneuil Hall Grasshopper and Shem Drown." *Journal of the New York Entomological Society* 62, 165–166.

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